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J. F. Jameson

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THE REPLY OF THE TRUSTEES TO THE CLASS OF 1885

WIDE *attention and comment have been awakened by the memorial presented to the trustees of Amherst College by the Class of 1885 at its twenty-fifth anniversary, on the condition and policy of the institution. In response, the college corporation has made the following answer:*

TQ THE CLASS OF 1885 OF AMHERST COLLEGE

THE president and trustees of Amherst College recognize in your address a gratifying proof of the affectionate care of our alumni for this institution as a home of learning, from which they have profited and desire others to profit. You have done Amherst a great service by drawing the attention of the world of education to the policy of the College. Your criticism is frank, loyal, and helpful. We approve your spirit and intent. Your proposals are all the more valuable and gain greatly in practical

efficiency and application because they urge much that the College administration was already putting into operation when your memorial was presented; and this advance has been supplemented by your advice. Our mutual confidence in the policy of our College must be strengthened when we find that its alumni urge what the president and faculty were adopting, and that its president and faculty approve additions to its policy which the alumni propose.

Your address asks that the instruction be in future a "modified classical course"; that the degree of bachelor of science be abolished; that the College devote all its means to the increase of teachers' salaries; that the number of students be limited; and that entrance be permitted only by competitive examination.

We agree with you that the function of Amherst College is to train its students by means of the liberal arts and sciences for a more abundant life, and not for a larger wage. It should not attempt technical, vocational, or professional education. Amherst has always regarded both the humanities and the sciences as necessary to a complete education and the true foundation for intellectual discipline and for character.

A liberal education is not complete unless it enters several fields of learning. The value of the ancient classics, that is, the Greek and Latin languages and literatures, is recognized. But there are other knowledges that are requisite to a liberal education. Science, which has so developed in the last fifty years as to be a new creation, is a discipline, is a knowledge that every educated man should have. This, indeed, is recognized in your address when you say, "All would agree that some knowledge of science is part of a liberal education," that "in any teaching of the experience of the race, the sciences have a necessary place." But history, philosophy, mathematics, political science, economics, music, the literature of one's own tongue, German and Romance languages and literatures, certainly a liberally educated man should know something of these great experiences of the human race. The curriculum includes all these subjects, and more than half of the choices of students are made from among them.

Amherst does not, however, leave the selection of studies to the wandering choice of the student. It has applied this principle to physical development as well as to mental

training. The studies of the first year are prescribed: Latin and Greek, or Latin and a modern language, mathematics, English, and a science. The second year an ancient language and a science are continued, and three subjects are chosen. The third and fourth years the student chooses all the subjects he will pursue. Thus about one-third of the whole number of courses is prescribed and two-thirds are elective. In order that some studies may be continued beyond the elementary stage, three of the subjects elected are studied three years and one subject two years, while no subject is elected for a course of less than one year. The three-year courses are called majors, and the two-year course a minor.

It is important that students have a working knowledge of modern languages, since they are more and more needed in actual life. To ensure this knowledge, those students that have had both Latin and Greek will, beginning with the next entering class, be required before graduation to translate at sight German or a Romance language (French, Spanish, or Italian), and those that have had but one ancient language, to translate both German and a Romance language.

If a student completes in the first two years the required courses in classics, science, and the modern languages, the last two years will offer a free and wide choice of subjects whose mastery and advanced study will be rendered feasible by the ability to consult works in German and a Romance tongue, by familiarity with scientific method and classical study on broad lines.

The degree of bachelor of science has not been offered in Amherst for a course of technical training, but for a course in which the culture of science and of other liberalizing studies was sought as a sound preparation for technological and professional schools and for life. For eight years past, three years of preparatory Latin have been required from those entering this course. But the degree appears now open to the misapprehension that it is conferred upon completing a course of technical training. Since it is a course in the liberal arts and sciences, there is no reason why the degree of bachelor of arts should not be given on the completion of such a course, and therefore the degree of bachelor of science will not be offered to classes entering after 1913, but only the one degree of bachelor of arts. As now arranged, the course leading

to this degree is a better training for technical studies than the course that led to bachelor of science. Four years of Latin will be required of all for entrance. Two years of an ancient language and two years of science are in the future to be required in the college course, instead of one year each in classics and science, as in the past. Hitherto half the College took two years of the classics and half two years in science, a part taking both. In future all will take both studies for two years. Amherst does not look on any man as educated unless he has been taught to interpret the problems of his own day through the lessons of the past and has received a knowledge of classic literature, philosophy, and civilization, gaining discipline in the expression of his own tongue through the mental process of translation. Neither does Amherst look on any man to-day as fully trained for modern life who has not learned the methods of the laboratory and laid a secure foundation in science.

With the requirement of a preparation of four years of Latin and of two years of an ancient language in college, Amherst is definitely on the basis of a modified classical course. It is to be regretted that the require-

ment of Greek cannot be made, since so few preparatory schools teach it. But the College believes in Greek, believes in its value for discipline, for the culture and for the wide horizon opened to the student by knowledge of the vital past on which the literature, the institutions, the life of to-day are founded and without which they cannot be fully understood. To encourage the study of Greek, plans are being made to establish a classical lectureship, and a number of honorary scholarships for students fitted in Greek.

The outside activities of the College have never trenched upon studies in Amherst to the extent that is charged elsewhere and intimated in your address. We look on these activities as of great cultural value, and we also believe that the development of the curriculum tends to the proper subordination of these interests. By limitation of the number of activities, by insistence upon good scholarship as a requisite for participation, by giving opportunity and encouragement to every student to have some share in them, we are securing from year to year a wiser balance of work and play. We would not prevent the competition of students with their fellows for prizes and honors justly dear to under-

graduates. In this spirit, besides the required gymnastic exercise, the College is developing team work by the general body of students on the athletic field. This year three-fifths, 300 out of 500, share this stimulus for the physical and social well-being, and the policy will be continued until all not physically disqualified are engaged in some athletic competition. Dramatics, music, literary publications, intercollegiate debates, and oratorical contests have a place and engage an interest of great value.

The Amherst graduate, with these plans and policies in full force, will have offered four years of Latin or Greek or both, at entrance; he will have had in college two years of an ancient language and two years at least of science; he will have a reading knowledge of German and a Romance language; he will have pursued three subjects for three years and one subject for two years; he will have had the choice, besides the requirements of classics, sciences, mathematics, and modern languages, of philosophy, including metaphysics and psychology, history, economics, political science, and literature; he will have had abundant opportunity to interest himself in college activities and

athletics, and he will not have been permitted to overdo in either. Best of all, this will have been done in an institution whose president, trustees, faculty, alumni, and undergraduates believe that the first office and duty of its training is to stimulate spiritual responsibility for the service of humanity.

As to the limitation of numbers: It is, of course, necessary to limit numbers in accordance with our equipment and capacity for teaching in the most efficient manner. The teaching policy of the College is to have small groups of students. The last semester 76 courses were given. Of these, 64 courses were taught to groups of 30 or less, namely, 18 courses to groups of 20 to 30; 5 courses to groups of 15 to 20; 11 courses to groups of 10 to 15; 15 courses to groups of 5 to 10; and 15 courses to groups of 5 or less. In only 12 courses were the groups larger, ranging from 31 to 54. The number 30 is arbitrarily chosen as a dividing line. There are few subjects that should be taught to as many as 30 men. The ideal of Amherst is small numbers in the classroom and thorough teaching.

We deem it desirable that the numbers remain in the neighborhood of five hundred,

in order that the distinct atmosphere of a small college may be preserved, a number not too large for personal acquaintance of teachers with students, and of students with one another, not too small for *esprit du corps* and enthusiasm.

Competitive examinations on all subjects we do not regard as the best method of testing candidates for admission. In view of differences of preparation and opportunity, we take the best evidence obtainable whether canditates can do college work or not.

Amherst is less solicitous about the size of its Freshman class than about the character of the Seniors it yearly graduates. It is as desirous to improve the work done by the lower third of a class as to lavish effort on the upper tenth. Hence our system of prescribed subjects and of major and minor courses, our raising of grades for passing in each course and for graduation, which has been advanced to a minimum of 70, on a scale of 100, after having been for several years at 65; our policy of small divisions, of examination at the end of each semester, and of rigid scholarship requirements in case of participation in athletics and other outside activites.

Such a course and such aims as have been outlined call for instructors free from anxiety over their daily expenditure. It is the policy of the board to increase salaries until they are at a reasonable level. This policy has been practically pursued for several years. The sum of $400,000 has been applied in the last ten years to raising the salaries of professors, while at the present time we are engaged in securing a fund of $400,000, which is nearly completed, for the same purpose. We mean to have the best teachers, to put the emphasis on teaching more than on research, and to make the emolument such that teachers will not be enticed away. We do not think, however, that the College has no other needs. The faculty is unanimous in the opinion that there should be an increase in library accommodations, that there should be another recitation hall, and more adequate administrative offices.

In reply, then, or in response to the address of the Class of 1885 we would say that the curriculum offers the studies of a liberal education; that courses in classics, mathematics, modern languages, and science are required; that the choice of three-years, two-years, and one-year courses is from history,

literature, philosophy, political science, and economics, as well as from classics and science; that the one degree of bachelor of arts only will be given; that the compensation of teachers has been increased and will be still further advanced; that the number of students will not be arbitrarily fixed, but will be determined by the provision for efficient teaching; that candidates will be selected according to evidence of their fitness to do good work; and that a high standard of scholarship is maintained.

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